



CAP Core Values; Baseline of Conduct

*The values of **Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect** serve as CAP's ethical framework*

An organization's core values represent the baseline of conduct expected from all members. They are indicative of ethical expectations and conduct based on fair play and social responsibility. There is a difference between Civil Air Patrol and most other volunteer organizations. That difference is reflected in our connection to a military arm of the government and the expectation we have for our interpersonal relations as members of this great Air Force Auxiliary.

GOALS FOR THIS MODULE:

1. Understand the rationale behind each of CAP's Core Values.
2. Discuss how CAP's Core Values can be applied on a daily basis.
3. Discuss the origin of CAP Core Values.
4. Restate the CAP Core Values.
5. Describe core values' cultural importance to the CAP.

In Civil Air Patrol, core values establish a common set of expectations for all members, and are viewed as the "price of admission" for members if they wish to participate in CAP activities. The values of **Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect** serve as

CAP's ethical framework for its service to America.

Core Values Defined

The meaning of the values CAP has chosen can be intuitively inferred by anyone who reads them. But it's important that we examine CAP's core values, both globally and from CAP's unique perspective. In that way, we can think critically about these values and make them our own.

The core values of Civil Air Patrol are based on the core values of the U.S. Air Force, which are "integrity first," "service before self" and "excellence in all we do." The CAP core values include the concept of the volunteer which is the basis of the organization. "Respect" was also added to CAP core values for additional emphasis on our interpersonal relationships.

Integrity

Integrity is a character trait. It is the willingness to do what is right even when no one else is looking.

Integrity is the very fiber of all core values, without it all other core values cannot prevail. It is the cornerstone for all that is moral and just in our society. It is more than simple honesty. It embraces other attributes such as courage, responsibility, accountability, justice, openness, self-respect, and humility.

Practically, it involves keeping commitments, being sincere, being honest in

word and deed, and expecting the same of others. Integrity also involves accepting responsibility for one's actions, and being a morally upright person. Former Air Force Chief of Staff, General Charles A. Gabriel said, "Integrity is the fundamental premise of service in a free society. Without integrity, the moral pillars of our military strength – public trust and self-respect – are lost."

Integrity ordinarily means forthright honesty. It means being the kind of person others can rely on for accurate, complete, and timely disclosure of facts. Integrity demands more than being the kind of person who can be counted on to tell the truth. Integrity also demands we be persons of good character. This, in fact, is the original sense of the word "integrity" as "integrated," "whole," or "wholesomeness."

The following quote is from an article by former Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila Widnall, and former Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ronald Fogleman:

"Integrity is essential. It's the inner voice, the source of self-control, the basis for the trust that is imperative in today's military. It's doing the right thing when nobody's looking."



Volunteer Service

Voluntarily giving of oneself, over personal desires, to provide for the welfare of others.

The Air Force has a similar value called "service before self." We embrace this core value and reflect it in our spirit of volunteerism. It is the willingness and ability to give of oneself, sometimes at the ultimate sacrifice of life. Also, it goes beyond simply giving our time. It extends to the willingness to obey the rules and regulations of CAP, the Air Force and our nation. Ultimately, it means we must have respect for fellow members and practice self-discipline.

To serve is to satisfy the needs or requirements of an organization and, in the case of the CAP, is to render service to one's nation. A fundamental part of serving involves following rules, showing respect for others, and enforcing discipline and self-control. As a volunteer force, it is especially important that each member internalize these character traits in order to ensure success.

The moral ideal, however, demands more than obedience. Service also demands that members always serve out of respect for human dignity. Service means duty, and duty means respect and dignity, and we must always keep that foremost in our actions.

On a more practical level, one traditional aspect of the CAP drives home the concept of service: wearing the CAP uniform and what it represents. Uniform wear in war helps to separate soldiers from civilians and one side from the other: it ensures the warrior recognizes the legitimate targets. Identification with fellow professionals may help CAP

members feel that they are a legitimate part of the military team and the uniform is the obvious visible evidence of this. But most importantly the uniform signifies that the wearer is a member of a professional organization and reinforces the notion that here is a person dedicated to service before self.

Excellence

Excellence challenges us to develop a sustained passion for continuous improvement and innovation to enable the CAP to grow and flourish in serving America's humanitarian needs.

We should always be in continual pursuit of excellence; there is no room for the “good enough” mentality in the CAP. Civil Air Patrol's dual vocations of *shaping lives* and *saving lives* mean that “good enough” is never good enough and anything less violates the sacred trust the American public has placed in us.

Excellence ordinarily means accomplishing the mission well and that's a good place to start breaking down this concept. In the CAP, the nature of our mission demands we must focus on the results and get the job done right and on time - the first time. Mission failure can have disastrous consequences and must not be tolerated.

As a moral ideal, however, excellence demands more than mission accomplishment. To excel is to surpass, to go beyond what is expected. We must constantly strive for such results. Brigadier General (Ret.) Malham M. Wakin wrote in an article on Air Force Core Values:

"Why strive for excellence, anyway? One answer to that question may seem wonderfully simple, perhaps some would rather I said 'simple minded.' If I settle for less than my best effort, then I must live with less than my best self, and I won't then like myself very much. I shall fall short of the kind of being I could have become; I may even be what modern psychiatrists suggest is very unhealthy--I may be ashamed of what I become."

CAP members cannot accept the status quo. We live in a world of rapid change which means today's answers likely will not satisfy tomorrow's questions.

Another quote from a commentary by former Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila Widnall, and former Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ronald Fogleman:

"Because we've been entrusted with our nation's security and a good portion of the national treasure--because our mission often involves the risk of human life and sometimes national survival--because we are authorized to act on behalf of our entire society--then the obligation to excel is a moral obligation for members of a professional force."



Respect

Respect means we value our diverse membership. We treat each other with fairness, dignity, and compassion. We work as a team.

Genuine respect involves viewing another person as an individual of fundamental worth. This means that a person should never be judged based on external attributes (i.e., race, ethnicity, economic status, gender, or other differences). Judging a person by their differences would serve to categorize the person, and may unfairly characterize the value of their abilities or contributions.

Another component of respect is the recognition that everyone is "innocent until proven guilty." Before rushing to judgment about a person or his or her behavior, it is important to have the whole story.

The effectiveness of any organization is greatly dependent upon the environment in which people work. We must create an atmosphere in the CAP where mutual respect abounds, making way for prosperity, innovation and excellence in serving this great nation.



Core Values Applied

You expect the people you buy from to be honest with you (integrity) or you don't do business with them. You expect them to go out of their way to meet your needs (service). You expect reliability from their products (excellence). And, you expect them to recognize and appreciate the fact that you don't have to buy from them if they violate these expectations (respect). The application of core values in daily life is just as easily applied to personal relationships, dealings at work or school or work, and time at play with other people.

Now let's consider CAP unit applications. Would you try to do what's best for the unit, even if it meant some personal inconvenience? How about a minor inconvenience, like giving up a Saturday to take cadets for a field exercise, or calling the flight release officer before flying that proficiency sortie? How about a major inconvenience, like going out at 2:00 on a cold January morning to search for an Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) even though you know with a 99% probability that it would be a false alarm? How would you know it WASN'T a real emergency? You can see the implications for volunteer service.

Don't you feel great when you know your job better than anyone else and you deliver the results every single time? Don't you feel great when you are just learning the job, are challenged to try your best, and succeed? How do you feel when you are the best, but you coast on an assignment or just go through the motions, and make a mistake you knew didn't need to occur? Would you agree that excellence means perhaps not being the best at something, but giving it everything you have regardless?

Which commander would you rather work for: someone who inspires you, appreciates the work you do, is calm and fair, and shows that appreciation to you and others? Or would you rather work for a commander who is quick tempered, doesn't have a clue about what you are doing, demands respect though you know they have little respect for you, and relies on intimidation to achieve results? Which type of commander would you rather be?

Core values have very real implications. It is not a vague concept or a mantra to be repeated in the hope that someday it'll catch on. Core values – CAP's or any others' – require a cultural commitment to decency, a personal commitment to treat others as you would like to be treated, and an organizational commitment to deliver services of the quality that you would expect to have for yourself.

Core values require that you do the best you can to embody its principles, even, as former Air Force Chief of Staff General Ronald Fogleman said, "...when no one else is watching."

REFERENCE:

Civil Air Patrol Pamphlet 50-2, *Civil Air Patrol Core Values*.

